

Message Text

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SUBJECT: WEIZMAN AND THE PEACE PROCESS

REF: CAIRO 12329

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN MAY 4 WE TOUCHED ON SEVERAL ASPECTS OF RECENT HISTORY WHICH MAY BE WORTH RECORDING. WITH REGARD TO THE NEW INFORMATION ABOUT WEIZMAN AND BARAK'S DISCUSSIONS IN CAIRO IN MARCH WHICH WAS FURNISHED BY BARAK TO SECRETARY VANCE DURING THE RECENT MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON, WEIZMAN SAID THAT HIS EARLIER RETICENCE ON THIS SUBJECT HAD BEEN THE RESULT OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN HIMSELF AND SADAT TO KEEP A NUMBER OF THE ASPECTS OF THEIR DISCUSSION CONFIDENTIAL BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. JUST BEFORE DAYAN WAS DUE TO LEAVE FOR WASHINGTON, IT WAS AGREED AMONG THE ISRAELIS THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO PROVIDE THE US WITH THE COMPLET PICTURE OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS. ACCORDINGLY, WEIZMAN SAID, HE SENT A MESSAGE TO GAMASY ASKING PERMISSION TO BRIEF THE US FULLY. GAMASY'S RESPONSE RECEIVED AFTER CONSULTATION WITH SADAT ONLY MINUTES PRIOR TO THE MEETING BETWEEN DAYAN AND VANCE IN WASHINGTON ON APRIL 26, WAS AFFIRMATIVE. WEIZMAN SAID THAT THE RE-
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SPONSE VIA GAMASY HAD ALSO HOWEVER MADE THE SENSITIVE POINT THAT THE EGYPTIANS FELT THEY COULD RELY ON WEIZMAN'S DISCRETION TO KEEP THINGS FROM LEAKING TO THE PRESS, WHEREAS THEY DID NOT HAVE THE SAME CONFIDENCE IN STATEMENTS MADE TO BEGIN. (EVRON LATER CONFIRMED PRIVATELY TO ME THAT THIS WAS INDEED PART OF THE EGYPTIAN REPLY.)

2. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOCK DOWN HARD THE SUSPICION THAT SADAT'S CHANGE IN POSITION OVERNIGHT HAD IN ANY WAY RESULTED FROM AN EILTS' CONVERSATION WITH SADAT. DRAWING ON CAIRO'S 11413, I VERY FORCEFULLY DENIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY CONTACT WHATSOEVER BETWEEN AMBASSADOR EILTS AND THE EGYPTIANS BETWEEN THE TIME WEIZMAN ARRIVED AND THE TIME HE DEPARTED. I MADE CLEAR THAT AMBASSADOR EILTS WAS BRIEFED BY MUBARAK ONLY AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SECOND SADAT MEETING WITH WEIZMAN. WEIZMAN CLAIMED NOT TO HAVE TAKEN THIS STORY SERIOUSLY HIMSELF, BUT MERELY TO HAVE ENTERTAINED IT AS A POSSIBLE SUSPICION, WHICH HE WAS VERY HAPPY TO DISCARD. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD NOW CONCLUDED IN HIS OWN MIND THAT WHAT PROBABLY HAPPENED WAS THAT SADAT CHANGED HIS MIND OVERNIGHT, PERHAPS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS OR OTHER ADVISERS. AS SUBSTANTIATING EVIDENCE, HE SAID THAT GAMASY SEEMED TO BE TOTALLY SURPRISED BY SADAT'S CHANGE OF POSITION DURING THE FRIDAY MORNING MEETING, HE QUOTED GAMASY AS SAYING ON THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT THAT "PERHAPS THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD GOTTEN TO SADAT BETWEEN THURSDAY AND FRIDAY."

3. WEIZMAN SAID HE HAD HEARD SOME RUMORS THAT FAHMY WAS AGAIN BECOMING A FACTOR IN THE CAIRO SCENE AND ASKED "HOW IS HE BEHAVING?" I REPLIED THAT IT WAS MY UNDER-SECRET

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STANDING THAT HE WAS NOW SEEING MORE PEOPLE AND THAT THERE WERE SOME SLIGHT STRAWS IN THE WIND THAT HE MIGHT BECOME OFFICIALLY ACTIVE AGAIN--ALTHOUGH NOTHING AT ALL DEFINITE. IN DISCUSSING THE IDEA OF REINSTITUTING DIRECT TALKS WITH THE EGYPTIANS "IN SECRET," AS DAYAN HAD SUGGESTED IN WASHINGTON, I ASKED WEIZMAN WHETHER HE BELIEVED SECRET TALKS WITH ANYBODY WERE REALLY POSSIBLE IN VIEW OF THE NATURE OF THE JERUSALEM POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT. WEIZMAN SAID THAT HE AT LEAST HAD DEMONSTRATED AFTER HIS MARCH MEETINGS WITH SADAT THAT DETAILS ON HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE EGYPTIANS DID NOT LEAK. HE POINTED OUT THAT NEITHER WE NOR OUR EMBASSY IN CAIRO HAD BEEN AWARE OF A NUMBER OF THE ASPECTS OF THESE DISCUSSIONS UNTIL THE ISRAELIS AND EGYPTIANS HAD AGREED THAT WE BE FULLY BRIEFED.

4. IN ELABORATING ON THE DISCUSSION WITH SADAT ON THURSDAY, MARCH 30, WEIZMAN SAID IT WAS A VERY THOROUGH DISCUSSION WITH BOTH SADAT AND HE "CROSS-EXAMINING EACH OTHER." FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAYS HE STRESSED TO SADAT THAT ONE CAN NEVER RETURN TO A SITUATION IN WHICH THERE IS A PHYSICAL DIVISION ISOLATING ISRAEL FROM THE WEST BANK

AND GAZA BECAUSE OF THE INTIMATE LINKAGE OF THE ECONOMIES.
HE SAID HE ALSO TOLD SADAT THAT ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN
THE WEST BANK WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN IN ANY PEACE ARRANGEMENT,
THAT SADAT HAD LISTENED VERY CAREFULLY AND "SEEMED TO
UNDERSTAND THAT THE WEST BANK AND GAZA SETTLEMENTS WERE
THERE TO STAY." IN TTHIS DISCUSSION, THE SINAI WAS NEVER
DISCUSSED,ACCORDING TO WEIZMAN.
LEWIS

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